

has frequently been castigated for bringing Sindona inside Vatican City. He bears no responsibility for that act. The decision was taken by Pope Paul, Monsignor Macchi, Umberto Ortolani and the gentlemen of the APSA, including, naturally, its head, Cardinal Villot. If Luciani had lived, then Villot's removal from the Secretariat of State would also have meant his automatic removal from the APSA. It is this organization with its immense portfolio of investments, not Marcinkus's Vatican Bank, that is recognized as a central bank by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Bank of International Settlement in Basle. It is a section that has much to hide, dating back to its deep involvement with Sindona.

At the time of Luciani's election, Villot had only a short while to

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live. He was a sick, tired man who by September 1978 knew he was seriously ill. He died less than six months after Luciani on March 9th, 1979. His death, according to the Vatican, was due to 'bilateral bronchial pneumonia attacks with complications, circulatory collapse,

renal and hepatic insufficiency'. It was known that he had wanted to retire but it was also known he wished to determine his successor, and the man he had in mind was not Benelli. If Benelli discovered the scandal of the APSA section he would undoubtedly alert the new Pope. This, combined with the other changes that Villot knew Luciani was about to make, created a powerful motive.* If he was at the heart of any conspiracy to murder Luciani the motive would have been the future direction of the Church. On the testimony of three Vatican witnesses, Villot considered the changes that were about to be implemented 'a betrayal of Paul's will. A triumph for the restoration'. He feared that they would take the Church back to pre-Vatican Council II.* That his fear was invalid is not relevant. Villot felt it and felt it profoundly.* He was also bitterly opposed to Luciani's plan to modify the Roman Catholic Church's position on birth control, which would have permitted Catholics throughout the world to use the contraceptive pill. With Paul VI, the creator of Humanae Vitae, barely dead, Villot was watching at close range the destruction of an edict he had many times publicly supported.* *Did Villot conclude that the greater good of the Church would be served with Luciani's death?*

His behaviour after the Pope's death was either that of a man who was responsible for or deeply involved in that death, or of a man suffering a severe moral crisis. He destroyed evidence. He lied. He imposed a vow of silence on members of the Papal household. He rushed through an embalming before a majority of the cardinals were in Rome, let alone consulted. If Villot is blameless with regard to Luciani's death, then he most certainly materially assisted whoever was responsible. His actions and statements ensured that someone got away with murder. He himself clearly had a motive; it is also clear he had opportunity. In addition, by dint of his position as Camerlengo, he had virtually total control over immediate subsequent events or, as in the refusal to perform an official autopsy, non-events.

It may well be that the various illegal actions perpetrated by Villot after the discovery of Albino Luciani's body were motivated by what Villot considered the paramount factor, the greater good of the Catholic Church, if he saw clear evidence of murder, clear proof that Albino Luciani did not die a natural death. Many would contend that his subsequent actions were to protect the Church. Even given that

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rationale, I would still contend that morally he would appear to have been in need of help.

IGN204

The Pope kept beside his bed, on the small table with his battered alarm clock, a bottle of Effortil, a liquid medicine that he had been taking for some years to alleviate low blood pressure. A fatal dose of digitalis, half a teaspoonful, would be undetectable if added to the medicine.

The only other medicines the Pope was taking were vitamin pills three times a day with his meals and a course of injections for the adrenal cortex, drugs to stimulate the gland that secretes adrenalin. Again these were taken to assist the low blood pressure. Courses of these injections were given twice yearly, in the spring and in the autumn. The proprietary drugs varied. One of them frequently used was Cortiplex. These injections were administered by Sister Vincenza. Luciani was taking a course of them during his Papacy, hence the need for Vincenza in the Papal Apartments. The drugs used for the injections, like the Effortil by the bedside, could have been tampered with

easily. No special precautions were made about the storage of these drugs. Access to them would not have presented any problem to a person with murder in mind. Indeed, as will be demonstrated, access to any part of the Papal Apartments presented no problem to anyone determined to end the life of Albino Luciani.

IGN145

Luciani, the man whose self-description during his Venice days had been, 'I am just a poor man accustomed to small things and silence', now found himself obliged to confront the Vatican grandeur and the Curial babble. The son of a bricklayer was now Supreme Head of a religion whose founder was the son of a carpenter.

Many of the Vatican experts who had failed even to consider the possibility of Luciani's election hailed him as 'The Unknown Pope'. He had been well enough known by ninety-nine cardinals to be entrusted with the Church's future, this man without any diplomatic training or Curial experience. The considerable number of Curial cardinals had been rejected. In essence the entire Curia had been rejected in favour of a quiet, humble man who promptly announced that he wished to be called Pastor rather than Pontiff. Luciani's aspirations quickly became clear: total revolution. He was intent on

taking the Church back to its origins, back to the simplicity, honesty, ideals and aspirations of Jesus Christ.

IGN146

His new name was considered a bit of a mouthful by the Romans and they quickly abbreviated it to the more intimate 'Gianpaolo', a corruption the Pope happily accepted and used to sign letters, only to have them returned by Secretary of State Villot for correction to the formal title.

IGN 147

Earlier, on September 6th, during a General Audience, members of the Papal entourage, fussing around the Holy Father in a manner reminiscent of irritating flies around a horse, publicly displayed embarrassment as Luciani held over 15,000 people spellbound.

NOTE. Photograph thirty (in latest edition) and its caption say it all with regard to this aspect.

IGN148/149.

Luciani obviously felt at home with the reporters. He was a man who more than once in his life had remarked that if he had not become a priest he would have become a journalist. His two books and numerous articles indicate a talent that could have held its own with many of the listening correspondents. Recalling the late Cardinal Mercier's observations that if the Apostle Paul were alive today he would have been a journalist, the new Pope showed a keen awareness

of the importance of the various news media by
enlarging on the

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Apostle's possible modern role: 'Not only a journalist. Possibly Head of Reuters. Not only Head of Reuters, I think he would have also asked for airtime on Italian television and NBC.'

The correspondents loved it. The Curia were less amused. All the above remarks to the reporters were censored out of the official records of the speech. What remains for posterity is a drab, unctuous, prepared speech, written by Vatican officials - though in fact the Pope had continually departed from it - mute, inaccurate testimony to the wit and personality of Albino Luciani. This Vatican censorship of the Pope became a constant feature during September 1978.

IGN150

Among the twelve Heads of State and other representatives of their countries at the ceremony were men whom the Pope had been anxious to avoid meeting. In particular he had asked his Secretariat of State not to invite the leaders of Argentina, Chile and Paraguay to his inaugural Mass, but Cardinal Villot's department had already sent out the invitations before checking with Albino Luciani. They had assumed

there would be the traditional coronation and the invitation list reflected that assumption.

Consequently taking part in the Mass in St Peter's Square were General Videla from Argentina, the Chilean Foreign Minister and the son of the President of Paraguay - representatives from countries where human rights were not considered pressing priorities. Italian protestors demonstrated against their presence and there were nearly 300 arrests. Later Albino Luciani would be criticized for the presence of such men at the Mass. The experts who criticized were unaware that the blame should be laid at Cardinal Villot's door. When the critical comments appeared Luciani was in no position to respond and Villot remained silent.

IGN152

When the new Pope remarked that he had been leafing through the Vatican Year Book to find out who did what, many in the Curia smirked and concluded that he would be a pushover, a man they could control. There were others who knew better.

IGN152/153.

In the event Luciani appointed Villot as his Secretary of State and reconfirmed all the Curial heads in their previous positions but the Curia were made aware that this was merely a temporary measure. Ever the prudent man of the mountains, the new Pope preferred to bide

his time. 'Deliberation. Decision. Execution.' If the Curia wanted to know how their new Pope would act they had merely to read his letter to St Bernard. A great many did. They also did much deeper research on Pope John Paul I. What they discovered caused consternation in many Vatican departments and a deep pleasure of anticipation in others.

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The death of Pope Paul VI brought bubbling to the surface many animosities that existed in the Vatican village. The Roman Curia, the central administrative body of the Church, had been engaging in internecine warfare for many years; only Paul's expertise had kept the majority of the battles from public view. Now after the rebuff within the Conclave the Curial warfare reached the Papal Apartments. Albino Luciani complained bitterly about the situation to a number of friends who came to see him. 'I want to learn quickly the trade of Pope but almost no one explains problems and situations in a thorough and detached manner. Most of the time I hear nothing but bad spoken about everything and everyone.' To another friend from the north he observed: 'I have noticed two things that appear to be in very short supply in the Vatican. Honesty and a good cup of coffee.'

There were as many Roman Curial factions as choirboys in the Sistine Chapel Choir. There was the Curia of Pope Paul VI committed to ensuring that the memory of the late Pope was constantly and

continually honoured and also that there would be no deviation from the late Pope's views, opinions and pronouncements.

There was the Curia which favoured Cardinal Giovanni Benelli and the Curia which wished he was in Hell. Pope Paul VI had made Benelli his Under-Secretary of State, number two to Cardinal Villot. He rapidly became the Pope's muscle, ensuring that policy was adhered to. Paul had moved him to Florence and promoted him in order to protect him during Paul's last years. Now his protector was dead but the long knives remained sheathed. Luciani was Pope because of men like Benelli.

There were Curial factions which favoured or opposed Cardinals Baggio, Felici, and Bertoli. There were Curia factions wanting more central power and control, others wanting less.

Throughout his life Albino Luciani had avoided visits to the Vatican. He had kept his contact with the Roman Curia to a minimum. As a result, before his election, he probably had fewer Curial enemies than any other cardinal. It was a situation which quickly changed. Here was a Pope who considered 'mere execution' as the basic function of the Curia. He believed in greater power-sharing with the bishops throughout the world and planned to decentralize the Vatican

structure.

IGN154/155/156

Obviously there were many within the 3,000 or so members of the Curia who would loyally serve and love the new Pope; but the way of the world is to ensure that negative forces often predominate. As soon as the result of the election was known the Curia, or certain sections of it swung into action. Within hours a special edition of L'Osservatore Romano was available with a full biography of the new Pope. Vatican Radio was already broadcasting similar details.

As an example of how to influence the world's thinking about a hitherto unknown leader, L'Osservatore Romano's treatment of Albino Luciani is definitive. Because it deliberately portrayed a person who existed only in the reactionary, oppressive mind of whoever wrote the biographical details, this particular edition of L'Osservatore Romano is also an excellent example of why the Vatican's semiofficial newspaper has been compared unfavourably with Pravda. Using the 'official facts', many journalists fighting deadlines filed copy which portrayed a man who did not exist. The Economist, to take one of several hundred examples, said of the new Pope, 'He would not be much at home in the company of Dr Hans Kung.' Research would

have revealed that Luciani and Hans Kung had exchanged very friendly letters as well as sending one another books. Further research would have shown that Luciani had several times quoted Kung favourably in his sermons. Virtually every newspaper and periodical in the world that carried profiles of the new Pope made similar totally erroneous assertions.

To read the special edition of L'Osservatore Romano is to read of a new Pope who was even more conservative than Pope Paul VI. The distortion covered a wide range of Luciani's views but one in particular is highly relevant when considering the life and death of Albino Luciani: birth control.

The Vatican newspaper described a man who was an intrepid and unquestioning supporter of Humanae Vitae.

He made a meticulous study of the subject of responsible parenthood and engaged in consultations and talks with medical specialists and theologians. He warned of the grave responsibility of the Church (the ecclesiastical Magisterium) in pronouncing on such a delicate and controversial question.

That was entirely accurate and truthful. What followed was completely inaccurate.

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With the publication of the Encyclical Humanae Vitae there could be no room for doubt, and the Bishop of Vittorio Veneto was among the first to circulate it, and to insist with those who were perplexed by the document, that its teaching was beyond question.

When the Curia moves it is a formidable machine. Its efficiency and speed would make other Civil Services breathless. Men from the Roman Curia appeared at the Gregorian College and removed all notes and papers that referred to Luciani's period of study for his degree. Other members of the Curia went to Venice, Vittorio Veneto, Belluno. Wherever Luciani had been the Curia went. All copies of the Luciani document on birth control were seized and immediately placed in the Vatican's Secret Archives along with his thesis on Rosmini and a large quantity of other writings. It could be said that the beatification process for Albino Luciani began the day he was elected Pope. It would be equally accurate to observe that the Curial cover-up of the real Albino Luciani began the same day.

What certain sections of the Curia had realized with a profound shock was that in electing Albino Luciani, the cardinals had given them a man who would not let the issue of birth control rest with Humanae Vitae. Careful study by members of the Curia of what Luciani had actually said, not only to his parishioners in public but to his friends and colleagues in private, quickly established that the new Pope favoured artificial birth control. The inaccurate and false picture L'Osservatore Romano painted of a man who rigorously applied the principles of Humanae Vitae was the opening shot in a counter-attack designed to hem Albino Luciani inside the strictures of his predecessor's encyclical. It was quickly followed by another blast.

The Press Agency UPI discovered that Luciani had been in favour of a Vatican ruling which would allow artificial birth control. Italian newspapers also carried stories referring to the Luciani document sent to Pope Paul by Cardinal Urbani of Venice in which the strong recommendation in favour of the contraceptive pill had been made. The Curia speedily located Father Henri de Riedmatten who had been secretary to the Papal Birth Control Commission. He described the reports that Luciani had been opposed to an encyclical that

condemned artificial birth control as 'a fantasy'.
Riedmatten also
asserted that Luciani had never been a member of
the Commission,
which was accurate. He then went on to deny that
Luciani had ever

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written a letter or a report on the subject that
had been sent to Pope
Paul.

This denial and the manner of it is an example of
the duplicity that
abounds in the Curia. The Luciani document went to
Rome via
Cardinal Urbani and therefore had the Cardinal's
imprimatur upon it.
To deny that a document existed, actually signed by
Luciani, was
technically correct. To deny that Luciani on behalf
of his fellow
bishops in the Veneto region had not forwarded such
a document to
the Pope via the then Patriarch of Venice was an
iniquitous lie.

IGN161

Luciani moved with an urgency that had been
noticeably lacking in
his immediate predecessor's last years. The new
broom was not
minded to sweep right through the Vatican in his
first 100 days but he
was anxious that within that time the Church should
begin to change
direction, particularly with regard to Vatican
Incorporated.

IGN165.

While Luciani
considered this unforeseen problem, several members
of the Roman

Curia who were strongly sympathetic to Licio Gelli's right-wing view of the world were channelling information out of the Vatican. The information eventually reached its destination, Roberto Calvi.

IGN167.

Though his bedside alarm clock was habitually set for 4.45 a.m. in case he overslept, the Pope would be awakened by a knock on his bedroom door at 4.30 a.m. The knock informed him that Sister Vincenza had left a flask of coffee outside. Even this simple act had been subjected to Curial interference. In Venice the nun had been accustomed to knock on the door, call out a 'Good morning' and bring the coffee directly into Luciani's bedroom. The busy monsignors in the Vatican considered this innocent gesture to be a breach of some imaginary protocol. They remonstrated with a baffled Luciani, who agreed that the coffee could be left in his adjoining study. The habit of a coffee consumed immediately upon waking derived from a sinus operation performed many years previously. The operation had left Luciani with an unpleasant taste in his mouth when he awoke. When travelling, if coffee was not available, he would suck a sweet.

IGN168/169

At breakfast, Luciani would read a variety of Italy's morning papers. He had the Venice daily II Gazzettino added to the list.

Between 8.00 a.m. and 10.00 a.m. the Pope would work quietly in his study preparing for the first of his audiences. Between 10.00 a.m. and

12.30 p.m., with men such as Monsignor Jacques Martin, the prefect of the Pontifical Household, attempting to keep people moving in and out on time, the Pope met visitors and conversed with them on the Second Floor of the Apostolic Palace. Martin and other members of the Curia soon discovered that Luciani had a mind of his own. Despite muttered objections, the Pope's conversations with his guests had a habit of over-running and throwing the schedule into confusion. Men like Monsignor Martin epitomize a very prevalent attitude within the Vatican which runs along the lines that, if it were not for the Pope, they could all get on with their jobs.

A lunch of minestrone or pasta, followed by whatever Vincenzo had created for a second course, was served at 12.30 p.m. Even this was cause for comment. Pope Paul had always lunched at 1.30 p.m. That such a trivial event could inspire excited comment within the Vatican is indicative of just how much a village the place is. Tongues wagged

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even faster when the word went around that the Pope had introduced members of the female sex to his dinner table. Pia his niece and his sister-in-law probably entered the Vatican record books.

Between 1.30 p.m. and 2.00 p.m., Luciani took a short siesta. This would be followed by walks on the roof garden or in the Vatican gardens. Occasionally he was accompanied by Cardinal Villot; more frequently Luciani read. Apart from his Breviary he found light relief with works by authors as diverse as Mark Twain and Sir Walter Scott. Shortly after 4.00 p.m. he would be back at his office, studying the contents of a large envelope received from Monsignor Martin, containing a list of the following day's visitors with a full briefing.

At 4.30 p.m., while sipping a cup of camomile tea, the Pope received in his office 'The Tardella', the various cardinals, archbishops, secretaries of Congregations, his inner cabinet. These were the key meetings ensuring that the nuts and bolts of running the Roman Catholic Church were all in place.
IGN169/170

This was the daily routine of Pope John Paul I - a routine that he took delight in occasionally disturbing. Without reference, he would go for walks in the Vatican gardens. A simple diversion, one might think, but an impromptu stroll threw Vatican protocol and the Swiss

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Guards into total confusion. He had already caused consternation within the ranks of the senior officers of the Guards by talking to men on sentry duty and also requesting that they should refrain from kneeling at his every approach. As he observed to Father Magee:
'Who am I that they should kneel to me?'

Monsignor Virgilio Noe, the Master of Ceremonies, begged him not to talk to the Guards and to content himself with a mute nod. The Pope asked why. Noe spread his hands wide in amazement. 'Holy Father, it is not done. No Pope has ever spoken to them.'

IGN 170/171

Luciani began to explore the Vatican with its 10,000 rooms and halls, with its 997 stairways, 30 of them secret. He would suddenly take off from the Papal Apartments, either alone, or with Father Lorenzi for company. Equally suddenly he would appear in one of the Curial offices. 'Just finding my way about the place', he explained on one occasion to a startled Archbishop Caprio, the Deputy Head of the Secretariat of State.

They did not like it. They did not like it at all. The Curia were accustomed to a Pope who knew his place, one who worked through the bureaucratic channels. This one was everywhere, into everything, and worse he wanted to make changes. The battle over the wretched sedia gestatoria, the chair on which previous Popes had always been carried during public appearances, began to assume extraordinary

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proportions. Luciani had it banished to the lumber room. The traditionalists began a fight to have it brought back. That issues so petty should take up a Pope's time is an illuminating comment on the perspectives of certain sections of the Roman Curia.

Luciani attempted to reason with men like Monsignor Noe as one does with a child. Their world was not his and he was clearly not about to join theirs. He explained to Noe and to others that he walked in public because he considered that he was no better than any other man. He detested the chair and what it epitomized. 'Ah but the crowds cannot see you,' the Curia said. 'They are demanding its return. All should be able to see the Holy Father.' Luciani doggedly pointed out that he was frequently on television, that he came to the balcony every Sunday for the Angelus. He also said how much he detested the idea of being carried virtually upon the backs of other men.

'But Holiness', the Curia said, 'if you seek an even deeper humility than you already clearly have, what could be more humiliating than to be carried in this chair which you detest so much?' Faced with this

argument the Pope conceded defeat. At his second public audience he was carried into the Nervi Hall on the sedia gestatoria.

While some of Luciani's time was occupied on Curia trivia, the majority of his waking hours were given to more serious problems. He had told the diplomatic corps that the Vatican renounced all claims to temporal power. Notwithstanding, the new Pope rapidly discovered that virtually every major world problem passed through his in-tray. The Roman Catholic Church, with over 18 per cent of the world's population owing spiritual allegiance to it, represents a potent force; as such, it was obliged to take a position and have an attitude on a wide range of problems.

Apart from his attitude towards Argentina's General Videla, what would be Albino Luciani's response to the plethora of dictators who presided over large Catholic populations? What would be his response to the Marcos clique in the Philippines with its 43 million Catholics? To the self-elected Pinochet in Chile with its over 80 per cent Catholic population? To General Somoza of Nicaragua, the dictator so much admired by Vatican financial adviser Michele Sindona? How would Luciani restore the Roman Catholic Church to a home for the poor and

underprivileged in a country like Uganda where Amin was arranging fatal accidents for priests as an almost daily event? What would be his response to the Catholics of El Salvador, where some members of the ruling junta considered that to be a Catholic was to be the 'enemy'? This, in a country with a 96 per cent Catholic population, promised to

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be a recipe for genocide, and a problem slightly more serious than the Vatican debate about the Pope's chair.

IGN173

On September 15th, one of the men whom Luciani saw during his morning audiences was Cardinal Gabriel-Marie Garrone, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. This particular audience is an excellent example of just how remarkable were the talents of Luciani. Garrone had come to discuss a document called Sapienza Christiana, which dealt with the apostolic constitution and with the directives and rules governing all Catholic faculties throughout the world. As long ago as the early 1960s, Vatican Council II had revised the guidelines for seminarians. After two years of internal discussion the Roman Curia had sent its proposals to the world's bishops for their recommendations. All the relevant documents had then been submitted to two more Curial meetings attended by non-Curial consultants. The results were then examined by at least six Curial departments and the final document had been handed to Pope Paul VI in April 1978, sixteen years after the proposed reforms had

first been discussed. Paul had wanted to issue the document on June 29th, the Feast Day of St Peter and St Paul, but a document with a gestation period of some sixteen years could not be rushed so quickly through the Curia's department of translation. By the time they had the document prepared, Pope Paul was dead. Any initiative unproclaimed at the time of a Pope's death falls, unless his successor approves it. Consequently, Cardinal Garrone approached his audience with the new Pope with considerable trepidation. Sixteen years of long, hard work could be tossed into the waste-paper basket if Luciani rejected the document. The former seminary teacher from Belluno told Garrone that he had spent most of the previous day studying the document. Then without referring to a copy of it he began to discuss it

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at length and in great detail. Garrone sat astonished at the Pope's grasp and understanding of such a highly complex document. At the end of the audience, Luciani advised him that the document had his approval and that it should be published on December 15th.

Like Casaroli, Baggio, Lorscheider and a number of other men, Garrone left a discussion with Luciani in complete awe. Returning to his office he chanced to meet Monsignor Scalzotto of Propaganda Fide and remarked: 'I have just met a great Pope.'

The 'great Pope' meanwhile continued to work his way through the mountain of problems left by Paul.

IGN178

The Cardinal (Cody) took out further insurance by spreading Chicago's wealth around certain sections of the Roman Curia. When Cody was in town, and he made over one hundred trips to Rome, he distributed expensive presents where they would do him most good.

A gold cigarette lighter to this monsignor, a Patek Philippe watch to that bishop.

IGN183/184

Pia saw just how hard the job could be - made harder by the

obduracy of the ever-watchful Curia. Luciani wished to treat Rome as his new parish, to wander through the streets as he had in Venice and his other dioceses. For a Head of State to behave in such a manner presented problems. The Curia flatly declared the idea not only unthinkable, but unworkable. The city would be thrown into constant chaos if the Holy Father went on walkabouts. Luciani abandoned the idea but only for a modified version. He told the Vatican officials that he wished to visit every hospital, church and refuge centre in Rome and gradually work his way round what he regarded as his parish. For a man bent on being a pastoral Pope the reality on his own doorstep presented a powerful challenge.

Rome has a Catholic population of two-and-a-half million. It should have been producing at least seventy new priests per year. When Luciani became Pope it was producing six. The religious life of Rome

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was being maintained by enormous importations of clergy from outside. Many parts of the city were, in reality, pagan, with Church attendances of less than 3 per cent of the population. Here, in the heart of the Faith, cynicism abounded.

The city that was now home to Luciani was also home to the Communist Mayor Carlo Argan - a Communist Mayor in a city whose major industry, religion, is rivalled only by the crime rate. One of the new titles Luciani had acquired was Bishop of Rome, a city that had been without a bishop, in the sense that Milan, Venice, Florence and Naples had a bishop, for over a century. It showed.

As Pia lunched with the Pope, Don Diego was involved in a loud, lengthy argument with a Curial official who refused even to consider the Papal wish to visit various parts of Rome. Luciani interrupted his conversation with Pia.

'Don Diego. Tell him it must be done. Tell him the Pope wishes it.'

Lorenzi conveyed the Papal instruction, only to be met with a

refusal. He turned to the Pope. 'They say it can't be done, Holy Father, because it's never been done before.'

Pia sat, fascinated, as the game of Vatican tennis continued.

Eventually Luciani apologized to his niece for the interruption and told his secretary he would instruct Villot. Smiling at Pia, he observed: 'If the Roman Curia permits, your Uncle hopes to visit the Lebanon before Christmas.'

IGN185

On September 26th, Luciani could look back with satisfaction on his first month in the new job. It had been a month full of powerful impact. His investigations into corrupt and dishonest practices had thrown the perpetrators into deep fear. His impatience with Curial pomposity had caused outrage. Again and again he had abandoned officially written speeches, publicly complaining: 'This is too Curial in style.' Or, 'This is far too unctuous.'

His verbatim words were rarely recorded by Vatican Radio or L'Osservatore Romano, but the public heard them and so did the other news media. Borrowing a phrase from St Gregory, the Pope observed that, in electing him, 'The Emperor has wanted a monkey to become a lion'. Lips tightened within the Vatican as mouths parted in smiles among the public. Here was a 'monkey' who during the course of his

first month spoke to them in Latin, Italian, French, English, German and Spanish. As Winston Churchill might have remarked, 'some monkey'.

On September 7th, during a private audience with Vittore Branca at

8.00 a.m., an hour that caused Curial eyebrows to shoot even higher, his friend Branca expressed concern about the weight of the Papacy.

Luciani responded:

Yes, certainly I am too small for great things. I can only repeat the truth and the call of the Gospel as I did in my little church at home. Basically all men need this, and I am the keeper of souls above all. Between the parish priest at Canale and me there is a difference only in the number of faithful but the task is the same, to remember Christ and his word.

IGN186

The Vatican recorded his speeches in the General Audiences when on successive Wednesdays he spoke on Faith, Hope and Charity. Luciani's pleas that these virtues be shown towards, for example, drug addicts went unrecorded by the Curia who controlled the Vatican media.

When on September 20th he uttered the memorable phrase that it is wrong to believe 'Ubi Lenin ibi Jerusalem' (where Lenin is, there is

Jerusalem), the Curia announced that the Pope was rejecting 'liberation theology'. He was not. Further, Vatican Radio and L'Osservatore Romano neglected to record Luciani's important qualification, that between the Church and religious salvation, and the world and human salvation, 'There is some coincidence but we cannot make a perfect equation.

Note. Pages 190 through to page 200 give many further instances of the resistance of Villot and other members of the Roman Curia to Pope John Paul I .

LC 98

FELICI: Which is more important, justice for one dead man or the life of Christ's Church. Let us assume you are right. Let us assume someone murdered the Pope. It might have been someone outside the Church...but let us assume it ws someone in the Church. Balance the harm your investigation will cause the Church against the benefit of punishing one man or even a group of men. In the end God will judge.

BENELLI: What God chooses to do is his Business. Luciani's death is mine.

FELICI You will establish nothing without an autopsy and for that you need a precedent.

BENELLI: There is a precedent.

FELICI: (Slowly nodding) Pius VIII..yes, you can force an autopsy and the investigation. But what you really want is Villot, Marcinkus,myseslf and others out of Rome. You will not accomplish that

with an autopsy. The only way you can is if you become Pope.

NOTE Three of the following suspects were "within" the Church, three were "outside"

IGN284/ and numerous other references.
The central purpose of my investigation has been the death of another man, Albino Luciani. Villot, Calvi, Marcinkus, Sindona, Gelli, Cody: one of these men was at the very heart of the conspiracy that resulted in the murder of Luciani. Before you, the reader, consider your verdict, let us take one final look at these men.

IGN224

Having previously been obliged to retract the statement that Papal autopsies were specifically banned, the Vatican was confronted on Tuesday October 3rd with the efforts of some tenacious probing by the Italian Press. Autopsies had been performed on other Popes. For example, Pius VIII had died on November 30th, 1830. The diary of Prince Don Agostini Chigi recorded that the following evening an autopsy was performed on the body. The result of the autopsy is officially unknown because officially the Vatican has never admitted that it took place. In fact apart from some weakness in the lungs all the organs were found to be healthy. It was suspected that the Pope had been poisoned.

LC 105

GANTIN: In the last conclave we left feeling that we had been inspired by the Holy Spirit.

BENELLI The Holy Spirit has been notably absent in this conclave.

IGN54

In theory, the cardinals gather in secret Conclave and wait for the Holy Spirit to inspire them.

IGN64

Hence his decision to vote for the Archbishop of Fortaleza, Brazil, Aloisio Lorscheider, a man with glittering intellectual gifts who knew all about the problems of the poor. To elect such a man as Pope would be an inspired choice with or without the aid of the Holy Spirit.

IGN 70

There was no doubt whatsoever in the minds of many present that the Holy Spirit was manifest on that hot afternoon. Others took a more cynical view of what was inspiring the Conclave.

And finally.

IGN248

When voting in the Conclave to select a successor to Albino Luciani began on Sunday, October 15th, 1978, the Holy Ghost was noticeably absent.